

LOUISIANA conservationist

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I give my pledge as an American to
save and faithfully to defend
from waste the natural
resources of my country—its soil
and minerals, its forests, waters
and wildlife.



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McFADDEN DUFFY, *Editor*

BOB DENNIE, *Associate Editor*

LIONEL W. TREADAWAY, *Staff Writer*

LLOYD POISSENOT, *Staff Photographer*

KATHLEEN NORRIS COOK, *Art and Design*

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COVER—First successful nesting of Brown Pelicans in Louisiana
in 11 years—Photograph by Allan Ensminger

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THE RETURN OF THE BROWN PELICAN



TED JOANEN AND DAVIDSON A. NEAL

A SMALL NESTING COLONY of Brown pelicans has been reported this spring along the Louisiana coast for the first time since 1961! All birds in this flock were also reported to be carrying small white cloth bands attached to their wings. Thirteen nests containing 20 eggs were located on a small shell island in Barataria Bay near the Commission-owned research laboratory at Grand Terre. These birds were a result of the restocking program carried on by the Refuge Division of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission each year since 1968.

In early spring of 1968, representatives of various state game departments, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, the National Audubon Society, and a number of private organizations met at the Commission-owned Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge to determine the past and present population trends of Brown pelicans and to investigate the possibility of re-establishing a resident colony once again in Louisiana.

Populations of Brown pelicans declined drastically in North America during the 1960's. Louisiana recorded its last nesting attempt back in 1961. Also, Texas reported only two nesting attempts in 1968 where hundreds nested before. As an outgrowth of the meeting held at Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge, plans were made to ship 50 fledgling pelicans from Florida for release in Louisiana.

That year, personnel of the Refuge Division of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, with the aid of the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, obtained 50 young fledgling pelicans from Coco, Florida. The birds were trucked to the Rocke-



PHOTO BY ALLEN ENSMINGER

